



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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*Senate Bill 580 - State Board of Chiropractic and Massage Therapy Examiners and State Board of  
Physical Therapy Examiners - Dry Needling - Registration Requirements*

Letter of Information  
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
March 5, 2015

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) which represents more than 8,000 Maryland physicians and their patients, provides this letter of information regarding their position on Senate Bill 580.

Granting authority to physical therapists and chiropractors to perform Intramuscular Therapy (IMT) commonly known as “dry needling” has been the subject of debate for several years. MedChi has consistently objected to granting this authority as outlined in the comments it has provided in response to various regulatory proposals on the issue. Those comments are attached for your review.

Dry needling is an invasive process that has potential serious and life threatening consequences if not performed appropriately. The process of introducing deep needle penetration is a procedure that may include such adverse events as infection, pneumothorax, hemopneumothorax, puncture of abdominal organs or viscera, and peritoneal hemorrhage. MedChi believes that enabling physical therapists to perform dry needling would amount to the performance of acupuncture by individuals who have not received acupuncture training and would pose a significant risk to the public. We do not think there is any benefit to the public health that would offset the risk.

As outlined in the attached comments, physicians who intend to perform acupuncture must satisfy a multitude of conditions prior to being approved to perform acupuncture - including 200 hours of education. These requirements are designed to ensure that physicians have acquired appropriate education and training beyond their medical education. Throughout the debate on this issue, MedChi has not only consistently objected to granting physical therapists the authority to perform dry needling but has also stated that, should the State move forward with authorization in contradiction to the physician community’s objections, the physical therapists should at a minimum be required to complete the same or more hours of education and training prior to any approval for them to perform dry needling. Senate Bill 580 reflects the 200 hours of training analogous to that required of physicians. While MedChi still objects to granting physical therapists the authority to perform dry needling, it acknowledges the sponsor’s effort to recognize the need for an analogous training, should the expanded scope of authority be granted. For that reason, MedChi has not taken a position on the legislation but appreciates the opportunity to provide the Committee with an explanation of that decision.

**For more information call:**

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